

coextensive—that ere he is entitled without opposition and hatred, to lift up Christ's banner, he must lift up yours beside it? If you dare not apply such tests and act on such principles, what other tests, if any can be applied than the confessing of Christ's name and doing Christ's work? Show me such a man—show me the minister or the humblest layman who does so, and that man is not against Christ; that man I will not, I dare not forbid, for the Lord will not confirm my judgment; and should I be guilty of such sin or folly, Christ, in spite of me, will approve, and bless, and reward, whether I choose it or not.

The warning given here by our Lord is the more impressive, when we remember who the intolerant disciple was. It was John, the meek and loving! the same man who once asked fire to come down from heaven to consume the Samaritans. Oh, what a lesson is this! It teaches us that the finest minds and finest feelings are liable to coalesce with the pride of party and the love of sect. It shows us that in proportion to the strength of our attachment to the Lord, we should desire knowledge to guide our zeal, and heavenly wisdom to regulate and direct our love. Oh, how much do we need the Spirit of divine wisdom and love, to enable us to bear with others as the Lord hath borne with us; to move us to search for His image rather than our own, and so to enlarge our sympathies that every brother who calls upon the Lord Jesus in sincerity may find from us a welcome!

But there is another form of this sin of the disciples, which is very

common in our day, though not so easily detected as intolerance, and is the more dangerous because more captivating to the carnal heart, which does not seek spiritual communion with God Himself. The error I allude to is the desire somehow or other to be linked to the Saviour by what may be termed physical ties, and to undervalue the spiritual union which ought to subsist immediately between each soul and Christ. It seeks to become connected to Him by some human instrumentality. Thus the papist cleaves to his notion of transubstantiation. Now, putting aside all other arguments against this doctrine, suppose (and the horrid supposition is not mine) the real Body which hung upon the cross were partaken of, and the Blood that flowed there were drunk—I ask with all reverence, what then? There would indeed be a closer physical union with Christ than they possessed who merely saw or touched His living Body, but it would still be a union of the same kind. Surely in all this there would not necessarily be a partaking of His spirit, an appreciation of His moral character, an understanding of His love; and these are what we must truly have, if we would confess His name and do His work.

And so, too, there is a subtle gratification of the same carnal appetite, in the attempt to bring men back to the time when and the place where Christ lived, by endeavoring to form eternal chains whose links so lead up to the Redeemer, that if I lay hold of one end of this chain, I am thereby somehow or